BrUNIMA Bulletin No 98 JULY 1998

BRITISH UNIMA

BRITISH UNIMA CENTRE BULLETIN

EDITOR - ROBERT FOWLER

JULY 1998 NO 98

Editorial

I am very pleased to announce, if you have not heard already, that in the Queen's Birthday Honours, Penny Francis, Puppetry Tutor at the Central School of Speech and Drama, was awarded an MBE "for services to Puppetry." She thus joins a "happy few" who include John Wright, MBE 1977; Harry Tozer, the (Catalan) Creu de Sant Jordi 1997; Gretl Aicher, Chevalier de L'Ordre des Arts, not to forget UNIMA Secretary General Jacques Félix, just made a member of the Légion d'Honneur.

On the same day (14 April) that the death of Pol Pot was confirmed and Henry Kissinger (winner of the Nobel Peace prize, 1973) spoke of the "so-called bombing of Cambodia," I received a letter from Siem Reap, the cultural centre of the country, located about 75 miles south of the last resting place of the man born Saloth Sar. The letter was from a member of the *sbek thom* (large leather puppets) troupe of Mr Ty Chien, the 80-year-old *kru* (master) of Cambodian puppet theatre. Her letter also concerned a death, the death of a very famous Buddhist monk, or, to be more precise, his cremation ceremony at nearby Wat Po, and how the troupe (which I had seen a couple of months earlier) had performed the *Reamker* (Ramayana) there for four to five hours each night, 14-17 March. Many people had expressed the view that shadow puppetry was essential at such a ceremony. To my knowledge, it is a long time since the ancient ritual significance of shadow puppetry has been invoked in this way, and, although it was the old rather than the young who felt the need for its presence, it is, nevertheless, an encouraging sign.

At the same time my friend, Tomoko Fukutomi (a Japanese Khmer interpreter, who is living with Mr Ty Chien's family and devoting herself both to becoming a puppeteer and eventually the (first) translator of the *Reamker* into Japanese), tells me that the troupe will be performing for the owner of the Grand Hotel (cheapest room $275 a night); and, if he is satisfied, they will be allowed to perform short programmes for tourists on the hotel's stage. On the one hand, she says, rehearsing such programmes is not enjoyable, because the story has to be cut too much, but, on the other hand, she recognizes that it provides a necessary income and will, it is hoped, spread knowledge of Khmer puppetry far and wide. This kind of tension between cultural producers and consumers is not unknown here, of course, but the dilemma is closer to the bone in cultures under threat. I am informed that there should be an opportunity to see a Khmer *ayang* (small leather puppet) show at Charleville 2000.

To pursue the theme a little further, I saw the Vietnam National Puppet Theatre in London recently. When I spoke to the company's director afterwards, the questions I put were mainly about amateurs. This was not in any way out of (misplaced) disdain for professional puppeteers or worries about the standard (high) of the show I had seen, but, because no matter how good professional companies are, in Southeast Asia at least it is

the amateur troupes which are the bearers of tradition. When they disappear, the tap root is severed, and even the best-intentioned endeavours of cultural preservation/revival harbour the danger of enervating museumification – of Heritage. It can be argued that it is better to have cultural shows, albeit mainly for tourists (who are often the only ones able to afford the – by Western standards – small entrance fee involved) – the provision of employment itself is, after all, not to be scorned – but shows catering for tourists' tastes can easily become a denatured, pale imitation of the original because of the need to please an audience which has little if any knowledge of the culture, little or no understanding of the language, and, perfectly understandably, a relatively short attention span when faced with the unfamiliar. However, having begun on an optimistic note, I do not want to appear to end on a pessimistic one, and, to stay in the region, the Balinese are, of course, an oft-cited example of a people who have *managed* tourism – and, moreover, mass tourism – without, seemingly, undue detriment to their own cultural/spiritual needs. It can, however, be a high-risk undertaking.

Non-Ex Cathedra Remarks

Ray DaSilva

It was wonderful to see so many BrUNIMA members at the various events of the recent Belgo-British festival, organized by John Phillips. On the other hand, it was very sad that John was not able to attend any of them, owing to illness. Although he is still in and out of hospital, we are assured that it is "business as usual," and I understand that he plans to go to the Ghent Festival with Geoff Felix at the end of July. Many thanks are due to the BrUNIMA Committee for helping towards the success of our festival, particularly to Helen Fry, who cheerfully oversaw many of the last-minute arrangements, including the financial administration. Appreciations also to John Alexander for printing, publicity, and tickets.

CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE

Cover picture: Kasper stage on the Horse Market, Pest, 1858, from *Popular puppet theatre in Europe,* see below.	
The Belgo-British Festival – Charles Broughton	4
Bielsko-Biala 1998 – Penny Francis	7
Media Watch	9
Puppets in Prison Conference – Mickey Aronoff	13
Millenium I, by WA Dwiggins – Darius Halpern	17
Popular puppet theatre in Europe, 1800-1914 – a review – John Phillips	18
Eco puppets in the Delta – Meg Amsden	20
Vietnam National Theatre	21
Swiss-German Puppetry II – Mickey Aronoff	22
Invention - Imagination - Interpretation – John Furse	25
Bratislava to London	25
Bangdung Dispatch	27
BrUNIMA Annual Lecture, Diary	27
Housekeeping and Deadlines	28

Thanks are also due to The Little Angel, The Barge Theatre, The Concert Artists Association, Alternative Arts, St Paul's Church, Le Mercurie, and The Midlands Arts Centre. We owe special thanks to The Midlands Puppet Forum (Clive Chandler, in particular), which hosted all the events on the splendid Saturday, at which so many puppeteers were present, and to the Punch and Judy Fellowship (notably Des the Treas), which organized the historic evening meal and hysterical entertainment on the final, Sunday evening. The show on that occasion was Bryan Clarke's *That's Not The Way To Do It*, in which he portrayed a Punchman's nightmare with everything going wrong, which the audience was able to observe fully, as he must have left the cover of his booth at home. The evening concluded with BrUNIMA presenting a Bryan Clarke Punch to our Belgian counterparts.

The Belgo-British Puppetry Festival

Charles Broughton

At the beginning of May, London and Birmingham held a Puppet Extravaganza in honour of the visit of the Section Francophone du Centre Belge de I'UNIMA. Four visiting Belgian companies had the opportunity to watch a variety of British performances as well as performing some of their own work. The Little Angel Theatre was the venue for the first performance. The resident company presented *The Selkie Bride*, the theatre's latest production, which tells the simple tale of a lonely fisherman who gets caught in a storm whilst out fishing and is washed up on a distant shore where he finds and keeps a seal skin. The seal has transformed into a young woman who is thoroughly enjoying her new-found life on the land, and when she meets the Fisherman she befriends him and goes back to his cottage, where they live together for seven years.

Performed by a company of two, Jo Syz and Rebekah Wild, who between them acted and operated all the puppets, including a seagull that enjoyed listening to the shipping forecast, and a glorious lobster (made by Peter O'Rourke), which banged about in a large bucket. The selkie was a beautiful table-top puppet made out of leather by Lyndie Wright. It danced and leapt across the stage, entranced by everything it saw and willing to explore all the strange experiences that humans have to offer. Different-sized fishing boxes were used for the set, which were turned round, upended and generally moved about for each scene change. There was plenty to watch in this show. I suspect we were a quieter audience than usual, being mostly adults, but I can imagine children thoroughly enjoying the clever use of everyday objects for parts of the set (and the occasional prop) and the exuberant wide-eyed wonder of the selkie exploring her surroundings.

So there we were watching a large piece of blue-dyed silk cloth simulating gigantic ocean waves, and the next night we were on the very water itself.

The Puppet Theatre Barge hosted the second evening with *A Shipful of Verse*. Over the last few years those of us who perform in and watch puppet theatre have grown used to seeing shows where the operators and the puppets appear together. Indeed it is now the norm rather than the exception. So when you see a show that is pure puppets your heart (or at least mine) takes an upward leap. You remember that initial thrill that inspired you to want to know more about these wonderful beings that move in their own time and space. Particularly marionettes. Of course, it isn't enough to have puppets just wafting about on stage with no rhyme or reason – nothing captivating about that. They need direction, a soundtrack (possibly), music, lighting – the works. Mix all these elements together and you should in theory have a perfect show. *A Shipful of Verse* is just that.

Ten poems, dramatized by Gren and Juliet Middleton, using marionettes and shadow puppets and a myriad lighting and set changes, evoked an atmosphere of captivating enchantment. Sylvia Plath, Edward Lear and Robert L Stevenson were just some of the poets featured. Simple attention to detail brought out the best in the writing and the puppets. Two operators – Rachel Leonard and Mhari Smith – performed the whole show. There is an ease about their operating that belies its complexities, and a simplicity that draws you into the action. None of the pieces was overlong – a credit to the fine editing on the soundtrack – and the gentle transitions from scene to scene kept you wondering "What's going to happen next?"

Gren and Juliet made everyone feel very welcome, laying out wine and nibbles during the interval and inviting the audience to have a look backstage afterwards. The cameras flashed and the camcorders whirred, and they

will leave, I hope, in the prints they produce a permanent reminder of that particular joy which is unique to puppet theatre.

Now it was the Belgians' turn. We went back to The Little Angel the following night to see *The Legend of Tchantchès & Tranicula the Terrible* by Li Tèyâte dèl Clignète. (Repeat after me....) A traditional Belgian puppet show telling the story of the folk hero Tchantchès, who winked at us from the painted proscenium. This orphan, left to fend for himself, is adopted by a kindly woman who raises him on biscuits soaked in sloe gin. He thrives and grows into a sturdy lad, despite swallowing a horseshoe which has jammed in his throat. He meets the Emperor Charlemagne and becomes his secretary, going off to fight in the Emperor's wars.

This wonderfully robust performance, presented by the puppet showman, who operated most of the puppets and provided all the voices, had us laughing right from the start. He bravely performed the first half in English, responding to our reactions with the puppets addressing the audience. These finely carved figures were operated by a single metal rod to the head, which twisted from side to side in quick succession as the puppet spoke. Wonderfully costumed, with the Emperor and Orlando in full metal armour, they performed on a small marionette stage, boxed in on three sides, in front of a painted backdrop and side wings. During the interval we were invited to sample the sloe gin Tchantchès grew up on and, at 35% proof, it certainly set us up for the second half. Performed in French for added authenticity, it introduced us to Tranicula the Terrible, a Saracen, who was warring with Charlemagne, and it included two very physical fights. The puppets are brought together and then swung violently across the stage. A fatally wounded puppet stands on the spot and sways at impossible angles before finally dying. It all ended amicably with Tchantchès thanking us for our patience and sending us on our way with a little gold badge of himself. An evening of fun and entertainment. And then it was time to pack up and head for Birmingham.

I had a day off, time to prepare myself for Sunday.

The day dawned bright and clear, how dare the weathermen even hint at thundery showers. For today the Punch and Judy May Fayre took over St Paul's Churchyard in Convent Garden for that annual orgy of swazzling and slapstickery. The oft-repeated refrain of "I do like to be beside the seaside" introduced one Mr Punch after another, who then promptly carried out those familiar antics which have so upset the "politically correct" over the last few years.* The churchyard was packed and at three o'clock it was a relief to enter St Paul's Church for *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* and *The Legend of Manneken Pis* by the Belgian company Ombres et Silhouettes.

This show had everything. The first half, *La Tentation*, had a huge cast of characters, including the Saint, the Devil, a comical pig and an array of cameo performances. There were pyrotechnics, transformations, thunder and lightning, in fact all sorts of trickery, both visually and in the text, as the Devil tempted Saint Antoine. The show began with the narrator banging a hammer to gain our attention and he then went on to narrate the whole tale, speaking all the parts and occasionally being aided by the operators hidden behind the proscenium arch. The puppets were finely carved rod marionettes, this time with the addition of hand strings, allowing them to effect striking poses. Their

*Editor: The latest outbreak of this dis-ease is in the nanny statelet of Derbyshire, where, following a string of complaints, the council is introducing strict regulations for entertainers, banning the use of violence and bad language in their acts. Apparently, P&J acts could be barred from Chesterfield unless Mr Punch mends his bullying ways. See Deborah Collcutt's article "Violent rogue may soon throw his last punch", *The Times*, 18 6 98, for a rehearsal of the familiar arguments for and against by concerned parties – parents, North Derbyshire Women's Aid, a child psychologist, performers (Cyril Walters, John Kimmons).

legs were made of two solid pieces of foam and they achieved a pendulum motion by swinging from side to side as they went striding around the stage. I wondered about the proscenium setup. The puppets were on such short rods that as soon as one of them lay down, the operator's forearms came into view. You accepted this after a while, but I don't think it would have mattered if we had seen the operators performing in full view.

The Devil tried to tempt Antoine with every conceivable vice known to man (and woman), even turning his pig into sausage meat, but the virtuous Saint held out against all the temptations, and the Devil finally admitted defeat and left him in peace. The story was given a slight twist at the end when the Angel, who you presumed had been sent by God to rebuild the Saint's church, turns around, revealing a little forked tale just before it goes flying off to Heaven.

After the interval we had *The Legend of Manneken Pis* – the little wee wee boy, as my nephew calls him, whose statue stands just off La Grande Place in Brussels.

There is a great sadness at the Countess's Palace. She is so upset she uses a tea cloth to dry away her tears. She can no longer look after her little boy and, not knowing what to do, finally consents to hand him over to her warfaring cousin, who promises to look after him in the army. A trifle harsh I thought, the little boy's only about three.

They arrive at the field of battle and little Manneken Pis is hidden in the leafy boughs of a spreading oak tree. A huge battle ensues with multiple puppets swinging violently from left to right, some in black, some in pink, and the enemy – black or pink, I can't remember which – is roused and sent packing from the battlefield. Manneken Pis is safe and clambers down the tree, but then, Horror! The sneaky enemy have lobbed a bomb which lands right in front of the little boy. Undaunted by the panic, he pulls out his willy and extinguishes the sputtering fuse. Great relief and great hilarity from all parties. But then another bomb comes bouncing into view. This time Manneken Pis repeats his trick and then turns and sprays the audience at the same time. He is carried home in triumph. And the audience leaves, grateful for the little hero's cooling powers.

I didn't get to see AmStramGram, in the Theatre Museum, as the show had already started, but out in the churchyard Théâtre pas Sage were performing *Le Placard aux Balais*. A very different approach from the traditional shows we had been watching. Large colourful rod puppets operated by a black-clad puppeteer standing behind the figure and speaking for it as well. There was a Witch, all green with long red fingernails; there was a Wizard, all blue with a detachable hat; and a Teacher, I think, who was all purple. A revolving set and a number of Muppet-type puppets made for a very colourful show, but I was at a loss to know what it was about. It was a hot day and I was beginning to feel a bit puppeted out.

I do hope the Belgian companies enjoyed their visit to Britain. It is always interesting to see how foreign companies present their own particular brand of puppet show and I had a wonderful time sampling the various entertainments. Thank you.

Belgian Coda

Robert Fowler

AmStramGram's *Le Robot Alphazet* is a glove-puppet show. It has an amusing plot involving a crooked estate agent, a "robot," and a burglary, with some madcap moments – chases through the house with a pistol going off. The puppeteer was at ease with the audience and possessed an agreeable sense of humour, sometimes self directed; the music was pleasingly quirky. The piece could have worked, I believe, but for two handicaps – at roughly 60 minutes, it was much too long for its targeted, young audience, and it was delivered in English which was not easy to understand at times. (It is admirable that puppeteers should seek to work in foreign languages, and I have nothing but praise for the three other

companies for the execution of their task in this respect, but there is a big difference between even being able to speak a language perfectly adequately and being able – with all the additional strain involved – to perform in it. The choice of text is also important.) However, I look forward to seeing the two young members of the company performing again (perhaps on their own turf) sometime.

On the technical front, while St Paul's was a wonderfully appropriate location for the travails of a saint, the acoustics were far less suitable for Ombres et Silhouettes' performance than at MAC, and the Covent Garden audience was thus denied some of the pleasure of the well-delivered text in both English and French. Le Théâtre Pas Sage (owing to a change in the dimensions of its set) was also obliged to adapt to a noisier location. Such adaptability does, of course, come with the (theatrical) territory, and the company coped well amidst the hubbub.

The festival, in both locations, was also a most pleasant social event, with many joint excursions to restaurants (there was even a cake baked for the Birmingham meal with Punch and Tchantchès seated atop). It afforded an opportunity to see old chums like Georges (Wetters), Patricia (Plumacker), and Edmond (Debouny) but also to make new acquaintances from across the Channel. (On the cross-cultural gastronomic front, Martin Bridle and Su Eaton's excellent *Piggery Jokery*, put on specially for puppeteers at MAC, has the porker made into "bangers," while Saint Anthony's pig becomes "boudin"/black pudding.)

I should also mention that Jiří Kadeřávek, director of the Chrudim Culture Centre, spent Friday to Sunday in our company. He had come over, at very short notice, to see the festival, having been alerted to it by our UNIMA colleagues in Prague. My especial thanks to Peter and Sylvia Peasgood for their kind help in this regard.

1998 Festival In Bielsko-Biala

Penny Francis

1. The UNIMA Commission for Publications and Communication

Nine of the members of the UNIMA Commission for Publications and Communication held their meetings in Bielsko-Biala, in the south of Poland, in May, during the international festival held there every two years.

The meetings were intense and fruitful, and all the members went home with plenty to do before the Council meeting in Bucharest next October. Most interesting perhaps for British UNIMA was the decision that each centre has the right to print its own new membership and information brochure in one or two languages, using the original text agreed by the Commission with Charleville. Any second language must be one of the official UNIMA languages. Every member of UNIMA is entitled to a copy of the original brochure from the General Secretariat. It is only necessary for our Centre to send Jacques Félix an account of the number of members in order to receive that number of copies of the original brochure, soon to be available in combinations of two languages: English, French, Spanish, German and Russian. The text will also be available to any Centre's Membership or Honorary Secretary in these languages on diskette from Marek Waszkiel. (I can supply the English edition now, on receipt of a blank diskette.)

A new version of the famous UNIMA "Blue Book" is to be prepared for the next Congress: it is a sort of worldwide reference and guide book to the state of UNIMA and of most forms of puppetry at the turn of the century.

Information Technology advances in UNIMA. Almost all the Commission members now have e-mail and access to the Internet. The Brochure has been reproduced most attractively and professionally on the UNIMA Denmark Home Page (www.zitech.dk/userwebs/unima/unima.htm),

and there will soon be a Home Page for international UNIMA, in English at least, if the hiccups experienced along this path are soon overcome: we had hoped for this to be accomplished long ago. It would be helpful if readers could send me the names of any sites which feature puppetry: we know of course about the Rose Sage site in the U.S.

2. The Festival.

A new Artistic Director for the Bielsko-Biala festival might well have placed a distinctive stamp on this 18th one. Krzysztof Rau has recently been appointed as successor to Jerzy Zitzman and Anton Antonczak to run the Banialuka theatre and to choose the programme of the festival, but in the event the choice was as haphazard and variable in quality as these things usually are.

It is good to report that a prize for high achievement of $1,000 went to Britain's Stephen Mottram for his *Seed Carriers*. The production is a thoughtful exploration of the nightmarish potential of gene manipulation, and an exquisite demonstration of marionette manipulation. Each figure – part man, part creature – is a delicate sculpture, perfectly balanced. The production, with its large and ingenious set, is on tour in many parts of Europe.

The marionette was in evidence elsewhere: Albrecht Roser's cabaret still excites audiences, and David Syrotiak must have thought he had died and gone to heaven when he was asked to direct *Beauty and the Beast* for the Arlekin theatre of Lodz, given the financial resources for the scenography and the large and expert cast of puppeteers. It brought back memories of the amateur production of the same show presented by Derek Francis and me in the garden theatre of our Barnes home back in the sixties – not that I would compare the standard of manipulation, but the pretty, fairytale world with swelling music and without intrusion of the puppeteer was the same.

I hesitate to report that the finest production of the festival was one in which there was no figurative puppet whatever. However, the Białystok theatre's version of *Gulliver* was pervaded with such tender humour and inventive play with objects, such corporal skills and beauty of settings, that the audience was quite charmed. There are festivals of physical and visual theatre in Britain, and it simply must be seen here. The show, directed by a Slovak, Ondrej Špisák, has won prizes and plaudits all over east Europe.

DRAK Theatre of the Czech Republic fielded three shows, two directed by Josef Krofta and one by his son, now associate director of the company, Jakub Krofta. DRAK is celebrating forty years of life this year, and is to be heartily congratulated. Their standards of performance in every aspect of any production are still impeccable; their vitality is astounding. Above all, the intelligent interpretation of the texts they choose, in terms of images, acting and music, is always original and sometimes revelatory. If theatre with puppets has acquired status as a contemporary performing art in this century, DRAK has contributed to that status as much as any company or soloist in the world. All three of the shows in Bielsko, *Beautiful Tuesday, Little Klaus and Big Klaus* (which made use of slide projectors in an extraordinary enrichment of the scenography) and *The Ice Fiancée*, were excellent.

Other productions, remarkable for one reason or another, included *Where is the end of the World?* by Bobita of Hungary, a two-person show played by Marci Kovács and Zsuzsa Szabó, which won the main prize of $5,000, awarded by a jury consisting of 103 audience members given a special pass to all the shows. Although the settings and objects were unusually elaborate and attractive, I found it overlong, lacking variety of pace. Another Hungarian offering was by a solo street performer called András Lenart, who won not only a prize but the loudest applause from the last-night audience. The Municipal Theatre of Magdeburg, eastern Germany, received $2,000 – incomprehensibly – for a piece called *Sun*

Child. The production was a nonsensical example of self-indulgence by a solo performer which started well but never developed and seemed interminable. More encouragingly, a director and player I much admire, Janusz Ryl-Krystianowski, was rewarded for his lively version of *Puss-in-Boots*.

The operation of the classic glove puppet with any degree of skill and invention is almost as difficult as that of the marionette. It is also rare to see the plays of the 19th-century writer and puppeteer Lemercier de Neuville. So it is a pleasure to report that a Polish company, the Impossible Theatre, presented, suitably enough, his *Impossible Drama*, a medieval comedy, with brilliantly operated glove figures and excellent live character voices. It was funny and inventive, although the plastic elements were not very good, and the puppets seemed to have come from a dozen different workshops!

There were experimental shows and expressionist shows, banal shows and adventurous shows, so you see this was a festival like most others, influenced inevitably by considerations of costs and politics. But the best shows were very good indeed, and in Poland you are always certain to see inventive and ingenious settings and artistic puppets which illuminate the production.

One whose memory I treasure was a modest glove-puppet piece by a Japanese playing in the street. His name is Kusunoke Tsubame and it was called *Mouse Sumo Wrestling*. The story was a version of the David and Goliath theme in which a weak little mouse learnt to defeat a huge Sumo wrestling mouse. It was short, clean, cleverly simple, well timed and above all funny, and the audience, ranging from old and distinguished members of the puppetry community to small children, laughed happily. I fear it would be impossible to say the same of the other Japanese offering of the festival, which was a sad demonstration of Bunraku and Karakuri techniques unworthy of those names.

The hospitality was warm, the company of old and new friends delightful, and I was glad to be there. Bielsko is still one of the most important and enjoyable festivals.

Media Watch

In a dispatch from Yogyakarta Richard Lloyd Parry (*The Guardian*, 14 3 98) writes: "For all the modernity and bustle of the cities, Indonesia is a superstitious country in which ancient patterns of belief exist alongside modern religious practices. In Borneo, Dayak people combine traditional religion with the Catholic Mass. In Java, the most populous and politically dominant of the Indonesian islands, mystics like Haji Hadisukismo hear supernatural voices, heal and tell fortunes. Few Javanese take such practices more seriously, or are regarded with more awe, than President Suharto.

"Mr Suharto is also known to consult *dukun*, or sorcerers. According to Haji Hadisukismo, who worked as a mystic adviser to his predecessor, Sukarno, the President bathes in water brought from a lake on the sacred Mt Lawu. He is a devotee of the *wayang kulit*, or shadow puppet theatre, with its suggestive and allegorical tales.

"A story circulating in Jakarta tells of a meeting of ministers held by Mr Suharto to discuss a knotty matter of state. Instead of talking, they were treated to a puppet performance of great beauty and mystery. At the end, Mr Suharto said: 'I trust my wishes are clear,' and left the room, leaving the anxious ministers racking their brains to work out the play's message."

The article was accompanied by a fine Magnum-agency colour photograph, captioned "Shadow land: Traditional Javanese puppet shows, with their suggestive, allegorical tales, are a favourite of Mr Suharto." The only problem being that it was a Thai *nang yai* show.

Three months have now passed, and "'Puppet' replaces master," as *The Times* headlined it, or, if you prefer, in paternalist Indonesia the father has been metaphorically

killed, but, as it is Bapak Suharto's protégé, BJ Habibie, who has succeeded him, with only a slightly altered cabinet, from which only the most flagrantly corrupt have been expelled, and the "special status"/"cultural autonomy" offered East Timor has been rejected, I find it difficult to say what changes there will be on the riven archipelago other than a tentative prediction that *wayang kulit* will be less of a tool of governance under the new technocrat-president. (See also Anna Ingleby's comments in this issue.)

Those who have seen Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in America* (recently reshown on television), the story of a gang of Jewish boys in Manhattan's Lower East Side, focusing on "Noodles," a character played by Robert de Niro, will know that it begins and ends in a theatre-cum-opium den. Although it is clearly a Javanese shadow play and gamelan, the locale is always referred to as the Chinese theatre. Is this because of a generalized use of Chinese to mean an Oriental or, perhaps more likely, the influence of the term *ombres chinoises* to denote a shadow play? Was there an actual shadow theatre in New York at this time, I wonder.

This March-May issue of *Golden Flight*, the inflight magazine of Air Mandalay, carries a well-illustrated article on the current state of Burmese puppet theatre by Smith Lynn. Brief excerpts from it will be provided in the next issue.

To the Ends of the Earth: Danger UXO (Channel 4, 8 6 98) followed a group of British mine-clearance experts of the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) working in the particularly dangerous part of Laos near the Ho Chi Minh Trail, where an enormous amount of overwhelmingly American unexploded ordnance is to be found. It included a brief snatch of a puppet show designed to teach children about the hazards.

Tsar Boris's dismissal of the government could have proved costly to... Vasiliy Grigoryev, the producer of *Kukly*. At $6,000 per puppet, it would have been an expensive business if the whole latex cast of the Russian "Spitting Image" show had had to be ditched. "I think the best idea would be to turn them into condoms to promote the anti-Aids campaign. At least then they would serve a useful purpose for once in their lives," Grigoryev joked. As for Sergey Kiriyenko, the young, then-acting premier, according to Grigoryev, "Until we are sure he has a permanent position in the cabinet, we will not make a puppet for him." (*The European*, 30 March-5 April 1998.) Yeltsin's sole nominee did not in fact have to wait for latex stardom until the predictably successful third vote in the State Duma on Friday 24 April, when the Communists disobeyed their leader, Zyuganov, and voted for Kiriyenko in order to preserve the manifold privileges they enjoy as parliamentarians, which would have been put at risk by the dissolution of parliament. Even before then much fun was had with him: a sleepy Yeltsin fails to recognize him, confusing Sergey Vladilenovich (Kiriyenko) with Vladimir Ilyich (Lenin) at one point; on another occasion the young technocrat, who initially appears with a small bandage, ends up – after multiple assault and battery by the old guard, including being deliberately run over by a train – swathed like a mummy. Another recent episode had Boris as King Lear with Chubays, Nemtsov, and Chernomyrdin as the three daughters.

There are also occasional spin-offs like *Kukly shou-biznesa*, which had its debut on May Day and featured the likes of Pugacheva and Kobzon – "pop idols" there, unknowns here. Grigoryev confesses (in an interesting full-page interview in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 30 4 98) that he is not enthused by the idea of the show biz version, but his NTV bosses wanted it, therefore....

"I have not been satisfied to date with the Yeltsin puppet," Grigoryev laments. "We have had four of them so far and not a single one has been so good that you could say: Boris Nikolayevich is a success. There are problems with the Yavlinskiy puppet. The

Zhirinovskiy puppet is bad." This is a perfectionist speaking.

The Internet (3 6 98) provided an amusing piece on *Hartzufim*. The old law, still on the books, forbids the broadcasting of images of political candidates, except in the paid campaign commercials, for three weeks before elections in Israel. The latex puppets, however, have been contesting this piece of smug, beauty-parade legislation, and their programme in election week drew a larger audience than the actual campaign broadcasts. The chairman of the ruling Labour faction in the Knesset went so far as to urge the Central Elections Commission to outlaw the show for undue influence on voters. On the other hand, some second-tier politicians are said to have offered the $3,000 it takes (half the Russian price) to manufacture a puppet of themselves just to get their likeness occasionally featured – and ridiculed – on the show. Their use of the image of Yitzhak Rabin, the assassinated prime minister, to ridicule the frequent featuring of him in Labour Party commercials, has been regarded as blasphemous by many. Likud has not got off lightly either. The party's slogan, "We want a safe peace," has been spoofed by showing Netanyahu holding a condom and saying "Safe peace is like safe sex. Do you engage in safe sex with people you don't know well? No! It's the same with safe peace – and do we know Arafat, Assad, and Gadhafi well? Of course not. So we cannot have safe peace with any of them."

Meanwhile, over in Spain, Josep Borrell's early challenge to Socialist Party leader Joaquin Almunia over who should be Socialist candidate for prime minister has won him the accolade of a place on the television satire show *Puppet News*. The smooth and pushy publics works minister in the last Socialist government is known in the show as "Know-All" and "Mega-Pepe." (*The Independent*, 30 3 98)

Nobel laureate Dario Fo's latest, sarcastically titled play, *Marino libero! Marino e' Innocento!* (*Free Marino! Marino is Innocent!*), was premiered on Italian national television on 18 March prior to a countrywide tour. On the same day the Court of Appeal in Milan refused to reopen a case involving a massive bomb explosion in the city in 1969 in which 16 people were killed and for which three men, widely believed to be innocent, are serving 22-year jail sentences. The play is a typical brew of burlesque monologue, political rage, and buffoonery, employing cartoon strips, television screens, and a large puppet of Marino, the informer, reproached for "the 120 porkies" Fo accuses him of telling. (For more information on the background to the *cause célèbre* and a photograph of Fo holding "Marino" see Andrew Gumbel's article in *The Independent on Sunday*, 22 3 98.)

Arts Council advisory panels here have been resigning like mad, and, as if that were not enough, Culture Secretary (and English Lit PhD) Chris Smith has been drubbed by cerebral heavyweight, ex-MP George Walden for illiteracy and lambasted in a report by the Commons cross-party culture select committee, chaired by intellectual bruiser Gerald Kaufman, for the trivial pursuit of high-profile glamour, but what really worried me was Foreign Secretary Robin Cook (in *The Secret Art of Government*, BBC2) justifying the removal of a 19th-century painting of a Nepalese prince from his ministerial office on the grounds that it was "ideologically unsound" (he was, as it happens, mistaken even in his own terms).

Fantasy World Cup Live (10 6 98) kicked off with cut-out puppets of footballers. With the good taste for which Skinner and Baddiel are renowned, the sketch included the "off the ball" incident between Collymore and a certain striking Scandinavian.

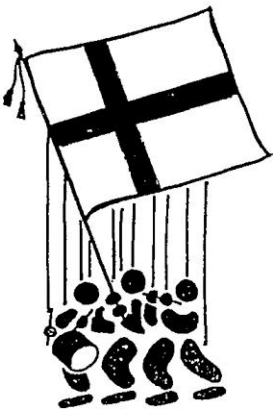


Illustration from UNIMA *Informations*, 1975

It's good for the profession that Jim Henson should appear on *Time* magazine's list of 20 most influential artists and entertainers of our century. He is in the good company of Picasso, James Joyce, TS Eliot, and Chaplin, but Oprah Winfrey.... Alas, she probably does qualify. By the way, Ron Mueck, written about by John Furse elsewhere in this issue, spent many years with the Muppet organization, with credits for *Dreamchild* (griffins) and *Labyrinth* (goblins). Although best known for his *Dead Dad* sculpture at last year's "Sensations" show at the Royal Academy, the first piece he exhibited qua artist was a Pinocchio figure at the Hayward's "Spellbound" exhibition in 1995.

Interviewing Richard E Grant, who is perhaps, despite having made a good number of films, still best known for his first, *With Nails and I*, Lynn Barber writes (*The Observer*, 9 11 97): "As a child in Swaziland, he made his own cardboard theatre and wrote a play at the age of eight, then progressed to having a proper marionette theatre in the garage." She goes on to say, "It occurred to me that his [rugby-playing] brother was probably more typical of the boys they grew up with and that perhaps playing with puppets did make you a 'pansy' in Swaziland. 'Yes,' Richard laughs, 'having a marionette theatre was a terrible indictment of your manhood! But I wasn't bullied or tormented for doing so. I suppose the most taunting thing was if somebody said, 'Why do you have puppets? Are they doll substitutes?' But as soon as they discovered that I was earning money out of doing puppet shows, then that explained everything.'" This is not the first time, of course, that street cred has been earned this way.

There has been a good deal of coverage of a new edition of *The Magic Roundabout* stories. I was not much interested myself in who Emma Thompson's dad may or may not have based his characters on, but did find it amusing that one of the alleged reasons the French got very sniffy over his rewriting of *Le Manège Enchanté* was that they thought the dog Pollux had been renamed de Gaulle, which should win them a tin-ear award if nothing else. Notwithstanding the hype, any children's programme which can get away with using "durance vile" probably deserves its (cult) status.

Praising Russel Hoban's descriptive powers in a review of his latest novel, *Mr Rinyo-Clacton's Offer*, Phil Daoust (*The Guardian*, 19 3 98) writes "It's the same remarkable gift for interpreting art that even made readers care about Punch-and-Judy shows in his best-known work, *Riddley Walker*." Even!

"These two are to children what a chainsaw is to needlepoint" is how David Benedict described David Strassman and Chuck Wood (performing at the Fairfield Halls in April) in contrast to such childhood favourities as Shari Lewis and the old sock otherwise known as Lamb Chop. *The Guardian*'s Pandora spotted a "freakish resemblance... between our Leader of the Opposition and Chuck."

Comedian Charlie Chuck's being described as the possessor of "wild Struwwelpeter hair" (*The Independent*, April) is testimony to the success of *Shock-Headed Peter*, The Tiger Lilies' dramatization of Heinrich Hoffmann's cautionary tales. The poster said not suitable for children under 10, and a previous production of theirs had been described as "*Blue Peter* meets *Blue Velvet*," so you had been warned.

A second excerpt of the following report, dealing with the UK and the United States, will appear in the next issue, but the full article is available now to readers on request. Having become more sensitized to the issue of prisons after reading Mickey Aronoff's article, I logged the following facts in the course of random reading. According to an exhibition called "Incarceration," recently held at Shoreditch Town Hall, "in September 1997, the UK prison population was 62,481 – the highest in Europe," while a report by Richard Tilt, Director General of the Prison Service, predicts there could be a 50% increase in the prison population in the next seven years. Lord (Douglas) Hurd, chairman of the Prison Reform Trust, recently pointed out that "In 1996 there were three times as many prisoners in the US as there had been in 1980. More than 10 million people will see the inside of a prison or jail cell in any one year."

Puppets in Prison Conference

Mickey Aronoff

In 1987, South Africans Gary Friedman and Nyanga Tshabalala initiated an educational programme using puppets to inform and create awareness around the AIDS epidemic in disadvantaged communities. Based on the success of this programme, the team initiated "Puppets in Prison" in March 1996, dealing with issues relevant to the harsh prison environment. Based on the success and the positive evaluation of this initiative, Friedman was invited by Jacques Félix to convene an international conference focusing specifically on the use of puppetry in prisons.

The conference was held 22 September, 1997, in Charleville-Mézières, during the XI Festival Mondial des Théâtres de Marionnettes. Its aims were to bring together specialists who have worked within the prison environment and who were involved either with puppetry, education, development, therapy or evaluation; to promote interaction and encourage the exchange of ideas, knowledge and experiences among participants; to explore ways in which prisoners can be empowered through education and through the learning of performance and communication skills; to develop strategies that assist prisoners to take proactive measures to improve the quality of their lives, both during and after incarceration; and to promote and disseminate information about the art of puppetry as an educative and communicative medium.

The following is a summary report on the conference, which, hopefully, would be the first of many.

Conference Opening

The conference was opened by Massimo Schuster, President of the UNIMA Commission for Solidarity and International Development. The Commission, also represented by Armenia and Iceland, was created at last year's Budapest UNIMA Congress in recognition of the effects of the ever-widening gap between rich and poor countries. Schuster noted that even in rich countries, the gap continues to widen, the top richest 20% controlling 84% of the world. In the last 20 years, 20% of the world's poorest people have become poorer by 25%. The Commission feels that rich countries should do something in collaboration with poor countries, and its work is to try to build exchanges and network people. Puppeteers, too, can work towards a solution.

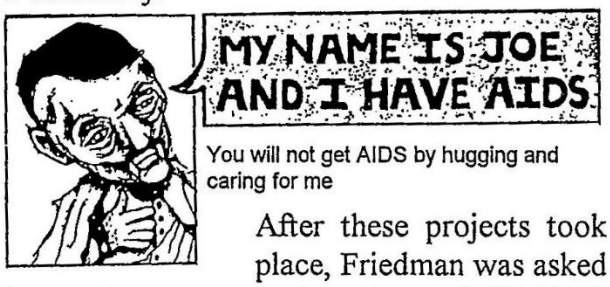
In the past few years, Schuster has worked in Ethiopia and in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and has witnessed how puppetry can work in extreme situations of war and poverty. Schuster felt that the South African "Puppets in Prison" Project, which he visited, is the kind of project that the Commission for Solidarity and International Development would like to develop around the world, this project being as free as possible from paternalism.

"Puppets in Prison" Project, South Africa

The "Puppets in Prison" project is run by Nyanga Tshabalala and Gary Friedman. Tshabalala trained as a television producer with Children's Television Workshop's *Sesame Street* in 1995 in New York. Friedman, a puppeteer, is the producer of puppetry programmes in education and development throughout Africa, Canada and Europe. He studied puppetry at the Institut

International de la Marionnette in Charleville-Mézières, and trained in film and television under the late Jim Henson in 1987.

Friedman spoke of his involvement in puppets in prisons. In 1987, he was using puppets in education and in development work throughout Africa. The first long-term project was "Puppets Against Aids." In towns and villages where this was presented, they designated narrators from the community, whom they taught how to use puppets in combination with music. This project was followed by "Puppets for Democracy."



You will not get AIDS by hugging and caring for me

After these projects took place, Friedman was asked by prisoners to introduce HIV-AIDS education. There was, however, no money for the project, and no entry was permitted into the prisons. These two conditions were eventually overcome, and the project was begun at the end of January, 1996. Friedman said that introducing the concept of puppets into a prison was difficult at first, but once it became acceptable, it brought people together and softened them.

Friedman showed a video documentary in which puppets were used in a Johannesburg prison to educate about AIDS. He spoke of the prisoners' right to protect themselves, including protection against HIV-AIDS. Revealed were overcrowded conditions, where people were locked up for long periods of time. Sexual activity plays a big role in the lives of prisoners. Resulting issues involve rape, sodomy and prostitution. Prisoners also sell their bodies for food and cigarettes.

In the past there had never been a sustained developmental program. But now there was. They began with AIDS education. Then object play was used to take adults back into play, reestablishing lost communication. They watched videos to learn about puppetry performance. Issues were discussed. Scripts and puppets were made. They meditated. The response was good: prisoners were beginning to experience positive change and began wanting to do new things.

Prison language was used to educate. The idea was to popularize puppetry to educate and to entertain at the same time. They created their own dramas around such issues as sodomy. Puppetry allowed people to do lots of things, to use their skills. It brought a zest and a unity to their lives. Self-confidence was boosted.

Friedman stated that, in this eight-week project, puppets gave an *anonymity* enabling personal matters to be revealed. Prisoners wanting to distance themselves from endangering activities took these issues and transformed them into performances. The message was that AIDS exists, that it kills, and that one needs to protect oneself against it.

After the shows, there were group discussions with an independent evaluator. The authorities were impressed and convinced they wanted a clear and comprehensive project diffused across prisons. The prisoners felt they had changed and could tell the difference between right and wrong. The hope was that their new skills would be integrated into society.

Next, Tshabalala talked of how they had to learn to manoeuvre within the prison system (they were not working in a rehabilitation prison). Ideas about the project were presented to all 7,000 prisoners. Auditions were held with simple criteria – they were looking for people who could sing, dance, and animate objects. They chose long-term prisoners so that there would be some continuity.

Tshabalala noted how difficult it was to have continuity with all the transfers going on in the Johannesburg prison, but they did find continuity in the other prison in Natal (Ekuseni). He spoke of how they wanted to

Illustration from brochure issued by The African Research and Educational Programme

go into the prisons without preconceived ideas; they wanted to get information from the prisoners themselves. They created games and role play to diminish the difference between the insiders and the outsiders. First came education. A specialist gave lectures on the effects of AIDS, including political consequences. A homosexual man also spoke to the prisoners about the subject.

They wanted the prisoners to take part in the project. Friedman and Tshabalala did not want to bring their own puppets. Instead, they wanted the prisoners to have their own ideas. The prisoners never thought they could create; they were never encouraged, and they lacked confidence. They showed a lot of puppetry performance videos to stimulate the prisoners. There was positive peer group pressure.

Some of the problems noted by Tshabalala were that some prisoners belonged to different gangs, and the bosses felt the puppeteers were getting the upper hand. The prisoner puppeteers were worried about receiving abuse because of this, and some, bowing to the prevailing code of conduct, asked to be excused. Guards/wardens were sometimes involved in unfavourable activity. Even though society has made some changes, the prison was still based on the white apartheid regime.

Renee Bub, the Project Evaluator, spoke of the process of conducting the research evaluation of this unusual project. Bub is an independent research consultant for AIDS-related research in high-risk communities, where there are, for example, migrant workers, disadvantaged youth, diamond workers, people with a low socioeconomic profile, and dysfunctional families. Her research was able to reveal the very high-risk sexual behaviour that prisoners are either subject to or subject others to.

The research report was used to give further direction to the initiative. Bub spoke of the problem of setting objectives to evaluation, where normally such things as reductions in partners or condom usage would be considered. With these criteria, she said, the project was highly ineffective. So, in order to be realistic when looking at such a hostile environment, she had to look at other factors.

Bub spoke of the prison's hostile and brutal environment, where one can buy anything one wants. Abandoned by family and friends, prisoners need money to survive. Sexual activities flourish through consent, barter, prostitution or rape. Sensory stimulation helps prisoners escape prison realities. The guards are involved in this by facilitating the activity. The prisoners resent this and revealed as much in a television documentary. The authorities' reaction was to state that condoms were needed immediately (*they are still waiting*).

Bub's research was aimed at three different target groups: participant puppeteers, audiences, and the authorities which monitored and helped with the logistics. They used qualitative methodology with focus groups and in-depth interviews. They asked themselves questions: Did it appeal to audiences? Was information relevant? What were prisoners' personal experiences? Did the authorities' attitudes towards the prisoners change? Could puppets educate prisoners about AIDS, with its highly charged and sensitive material?

The day before the performance, the audience (prisoners) were asked about their level of awareness of AIDS and their attitudes towards the disease. Bub said that there were still a lot of misconceptions about AIDS. There was also discrimination towards those with AIDS, and they saw using condoms as saying that "it's okay to have AIDS." The prisoners did not actually see AIDS as their concern; they had a superficial understanding and low levels of curiosity.

Illustration from *Chimneypots*, Pantopuck th
Puppetman, 196

After the performance, they were asked what impact the puppet programme had had on them. The prisoners said they were happy something was being done for their welfare. They liked peer teaching about something important. They also learned things. The education dispelled myths and taught prevention. Through puppets, knowledge had been transferred. There was increased interest in disease, increased discussion. *Puppets gave a nonthreatening medium for the teaching of sensitive information.*

The main criticism was that there was not a proper depiction of the guards' involvement, which made it less realistic. Another criticism was that change is difficult in a prison environment.

The prisoner puppeteers were very enthusiastic about the program, and about working with Friedman and Tshabalala. They felt it was a turning point in their entire lives, as they could now identify long-term goals. The experience gave them a role, a purpose, and an identity. Bub said that puppets led to rehabilitation. She also noted behavioural changes: the prisoners saw themselves as role models and felt they should lower the number of sexual partners they had. They also said they would use condoms when they left prison. They became sensitized towards prisoners who had AIDS. And there was increasing respect for victims of sexual violence. They also wanted to distance themselves from negative behaviour. Self-esteem and confidence were raised. There were new skills, both social and those related to puppetry. They learned how to become role models not just for AIDS but other topics. They made the point that the puppet is a nonthreatening and distancing medium to use with subjects such as sodomy and rape.

Bub stated a limitation of the program: After the 8-week project, Friedman and Tshabalala left for a two-week period. This became a problematic time for the puppeteers, as things were becoming "ordinary" again. This led to alienation and boredom; it was difficult to reenter ordinary prison life. Bub felt that if there is no long-term commitment, one can do more harm than good. She said that this was one of the best projects she had ever seen, but one also needs widespread prison reform, including rehabilitation programs and AIDS strategies.

Friedman ended the discussion of this project noting that three months more were spent in that prison, without funding. They are now working in a rehabilitation centre with a long-term contact.

Puppets and Prison Project, Strasbourg

Stanka Pavlova, Francine Stachak, and Jacques Schaab talked about their Strasbourg Puppets and Prison Project. Pavlova is a puppeteer who received a diploma from the Institut in Charleville, Francine Stachak was the writing project leader for this multimedia project, and Jacques Schaab was the director. No special permission was needed to do this project. Other workshops, for example, bicycle and computer workshops, were also held in the prison for three weeks each summer.

They felt that with the puppet project, as shown on a video, what's "happening on the inside" can be revealed to the "outside." As there is the need for confidentiality, precluding prisoners' faces from being shown, their solution was to have puppets. One workshop was given for men, one for women.

Women prisoners wrote about their daily life. Called "Séance d'écriture," the play began with strong and loud sounds, meant to be disturbing. A noisy alarm clock woke up a prisoner; noisy traffic accompanied a prisoner on her way to a writing workshop. They reflected bad memories for many of the prisoners, whose dramatic portrayal of the scenes was violently expressed.

The males made a storyboard together, doing all parts of the show. Schaab gave directorial advice. Although the men's group portrayed more violent crimes, their piece, *Aria*, was sentimental in its portrayal of a woman who had lost her husband.

Millennium 1 by WA Dwiggins

Darius Halpern

As the millennium draws near, it is interesting to look back and assess the literary predictions about both the pivotal year that will launch us into the 21st century and the thousand-year span that will follow. Some such exercise was carried out in 1984 when journalists and columnists recalled that George Orwell had written a masterpiece with that name. And the great puppet maker and typographer William Addison Dwiggins wrote a play called M*illennium 1*, published in 1945, which is both a curious view of the future and a well-designed book.

The play posits a future, a new millennium, in which machines have assumed complete control of the earth. Humankind has been forced into hiding. Living in caves to evade capture, the "homogrubs," as the machines call them, plot rebellion. The first act of sabotage, the rupturing of the machines' power lines, proves to be futile. A man is captured by the machines, and in a humorous episode, they subject him to an examination, thinking him to be controlled by machinery, like themselves. Finally, the homogrubs discover the simple secret that will enable them to prevail over the more powerful machine race: the leader of the rebellion, Blackmaster, discovers that the machines regard Man as God, since he created them. Blackmaster leads an expedition into the machines' central control room, and here he persuades oo and its associates that what they had regarded as "homogrubs" are actually Man. The machine world disintegrates and humankind is set free.

Dwiggins deliberately confuses the reader about the time and place of his "melodrama." The homogrubs, with names like Onway and Pittergill, live in settlements whose names have a New England ring – Cedar Hill and Bunderby Hill, for example. But some of the characters have Latinate names, like "Beätan" and "Narco." Some of them are clothed in ways that make you "think of Egypt, or of Crete," as Dwiggins puts it. Another one wears "a loose, pale-tinted covering – covered all over, like a polite Arab." But the balance of the evidence indicates that Dwiggins is thinking of a New England of the future. Both homogrub and machine speak in a casual Yankee slang that Dwiggins further refines by inserting italics and a sort of phonetic spelling.

About the machines themselves there is no such confusion. A futuristic picture is conjured up, calling to mind the most advanced science fiction. The machine controller, oo, is a "dome of translucent material on top of a cylindrical mass." The dome glows with a blue light when oo is "energized" and a light pulsates when oo speaks. "From the obscure base of the cylindrical structure, bundles of immense cables radiate in all directions...." oo's colleagues include N77, •33+ and Δ15.

With such ambitious plans for machine characters, the task of the stage designer and director of M*illennium 1* must be difficult indeed. Some scenes call for complicated foreground and middleground effects. This reviewer does not know whether the play

was ever performed. Of course, in stagecraft a great deal can be achieved with the power of suggestion, and Dwiggins helps by giving precise indications of sound effects to be used in combination with the machine world.

The typography and illustrations in *Millennium 1* have a definite appeal that the somewhat amorphous story often lacks. On the front cover is a red silhouette of a machine apparently in motion (see illustration); as a product of sheer imagination it is wholly convincing with its lumbering feet and menacing apparatus mounted above. Also on the front cover appear Dwiggins's flourished capitals and his typical combination of italics and Roman letter forms. Unusually, the dust-jacket book description starts on the front cover and continues on the flap inside. Inside the book, another delight: eight pages of illustrations in blue monochrome, like scraperboard drawings, one for each of the play's scenes, giving some notion of how Dwiggins imagined his machines and homogrubs. The machines are particularly impressive, visionary monster-mechanisms with no recognizable quasi-human features.

On the back cover, the publisher, Alfred Knopf of New York, points out that the volume is subject to wartime restrictions on paper consumption – how unfortunate that such an imaginative work should have been constrained in this way! But such a restriction only gives its triumphant appearance an added charm. It is also a book of some rarity, being a first edition of only 1,750 copies, and I would like to thank Ray DaSilva for lending it to me for the purpose of writing this review.

Photographs of some of the figures made by Dwiggins for this production are contained in *The Dwiggins Marionettes*, D Abbe, 1969.

Popular puppet theatre in Europe, 1800-1914 by John McCormick and Bennie Pratasik

John Phillips

This book is an excellent and much-needed overview of traditional puppetry in Europe. It is written in a thematic rather than sequential manner. The three main sections are: Context; Puppet Actors and their Stages; and Repertoire. The authors move freely from one country to another, with a comparative analysis of the different modes of operation and material and the influences on them.

Although there has been a growing interest in traditional puppetry since the sixties, this book is long overdue, for the authors examine the development of traditional puppetry, in particular from the middle of the 19th century, and the varying forms in which it appears. In some instances this is the dynastic continuation of a tradition that includes contemporary references, and in others it may be from those with an educated background who "may have university degrees, or drama school or other third-level training."

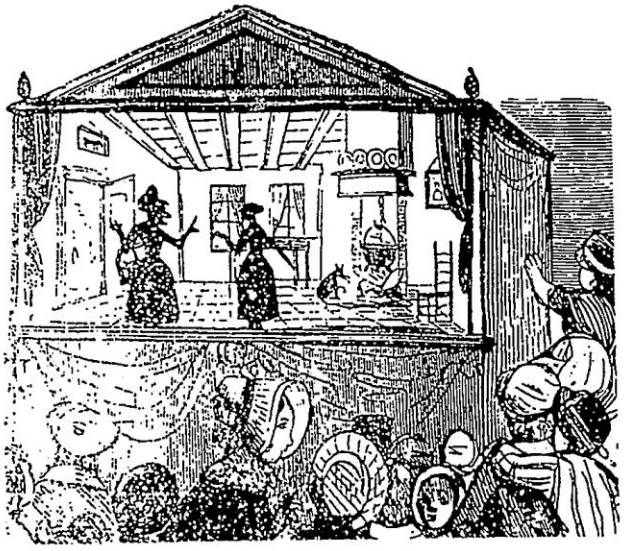
In looking at the situation today the authors refer to the Dombrowskys, who still travel from village to village in Saxony and continue to perform items from their family's 19th-century repertoire, and to Anton Anderle, a Slovak, who, while also a member of a long line of puppeteers, chooses to play the part of a "showman." The Al Botroûle theatre of Liège, run by Jacques and Françoise Ancion (which, sadly, appears to have closed forever), is mentioned as an example of a self-conscious revival of traditional values, whilst Ombres et Silhouettes of Brussels, directed by Christian Ferauge, and the Naivní divadlo (Naive Theatre) of Liberec, Czech Republic, are not.

I do have arguments with some of the statements included. For instance, I cannot accept that members of 19th-century audiences were more stupid than people today and that they can really have believed

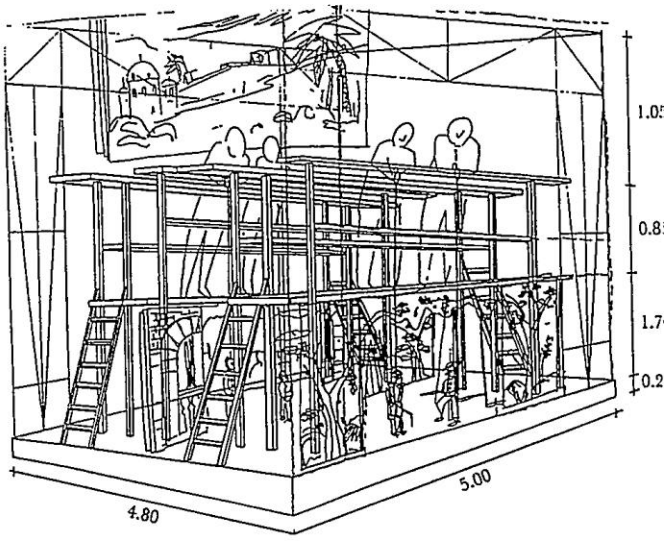
that they were watching living creatures rather than puppets, though this is a view commonly expressed (see also Henryk Jurkowski's essay "The Sign Systems of Puppetry," pp 57-84 of his *Aspects of Puppet Theatre*, editor Penny Francis, London Puppet Centre, 1988). Rather the spectator adopts the innocence of a child and the suspension of disbelief in pretending that the figures are real people, though they know full well they are not. All audiences which enjoy puppetry do this to some extent and alternate between seeing the puppets as people and seeing them as puppets (see Joan Gross's "The Form and Function of Humor in the Liège Puppet Theater," pp106-126, *Humor and Comedy in Puppetry*, editors Dina and Joel Sherzer, Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1987).

Another suggestion, repeated here, which I have never been able to accept is that the grille of wires at the front of the theatre's proscenium may have been intended to hide the rods or strings that move the puppets on the stage. My experience is that the wires have a distancing effect, for in actuality one focuses on what is happening on the stage by looking through the grille and is just as conscious of the means of moving the puppets as before.

There is a new contention here too, namely that the traditional rod to the head was replaced by strings after 1880.



Dutch 19th -century open-air shadow performance.



Plan of Lupi stage today

Unfortunately, this statement is unsupported by any evidence, and, as it is a topic that has occupied puppet historians for some time, really should have been accompanied by appropriate references.

On a personal note, I was surprised to see a group of the Tiller marionettes (which now belong to me) captioned as from the Barnard troupe (plate 40). This must have happened because the photograph is from the archives of the V&A Theatre Museum, where it was wrongly ascribed.

Obviously this book is not an attempt to be an encyclopaedic reference to all the companies now performing that might be considered "traditional," but it does present a fascinating survey of the many types of performance that come under this particular umbrella. Those who wish to see examples of such performances or even simply to be clearer in their own minds as to the nature of "traditional" puppetry can do no better than to buy a copy or, if this is not within their means (the hardback is £50), get their local library to order it or hope that there will be a softback version to follow.

Finally, I should like to say what a handsome job the Cambridge University Press has made of this publication. It is nicely bound, with well-placed and good-quality photographs to supplement the text. It can, of course, be obtained in the usual way through Ray DaSilva.

The last issue carried a short ethnographic piece by Meg Amsden resulting from her visit to Romania last autumn as part of the Delta project, which had featured in these pages before. The following is a much abbreviated, schematic version of material submitted by Meg, which, in line with usual practice, is available in full to readers on request.

The Danube Delta is situated in the southeast of Europe, where the Danube enters the Black Sea, and covers about half a million hectares. The delta was designated a Biosphere Reserve in 1990 and the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority (DDBRA) was made responsible for environmental management in 1993. The health of the delta has declined markedly in recent decades as result of pollution of the Danube but also because of intensive agricultural practices, fishing, and fish farming and changes to the hydraulic system. An alternative economic strategy, of which tourism is regarded as an important component, is needed to develop less environmentally stressful practices.

Eco Puppets in the Delta

Meg Amsden

The Shadows of the Delta Conference took place in Tulcea 26-28 September 1997 and was attended by 31 people.

The aim was to build on work already achieved during the early stages of the Eco Puppets project by the UK and Romanian teams, to widen the scope of the project, and to involve more people who could work together in the future.

The driving force behind the project has been to introduce the idea of using the arts in environmental education and, specifically, to explore how this approach may be used to address environmental issues in the Delta. This builds upon the experience of Nutmeg Puppet Company's work over the last 13 years with the Broads authority in England.

The initial stages of the project were aimed at a small group of teachers working in schools and out-of-school clubs and at DDBRA personnel. The conference was designed to consolidate their experience and open it out to delegates from different backgrounds such as puppeteers and artists.

Another aim was to set up a network of practitioners whereby participants would be able to share ideas and create new levels of communication in the future.

The programme included presentations of shadow shows by children from three schools; workshop sessions on shadow puppetry (Amsden, Monți Bouroş), ecological scripts (Sara Wilson, Nina Sirotenco-Mihalcea), and environmental art, using natural materials (Amanda Glover, Nicky Rowbottom); an environmental art slide-show (Glover); presentations by representatives of the workshops, with performances of two shadow-puppet plays; and a plenary session.

Those who came were the right people, being receptive to and enthusiastic about trying new ideas. New working relations could result from the contacts established at the workshop, and new schools were identified for future collaboration. The beginning of a network to support the work was established. Tulcea has no resident puppet theatre, nor do any companies operate in the region, but one of the puppeteers from the Galați Puppet Theatre, Rodica Panu, hopes to spend her summer holiday in the Delta, touring a puppet show in return for expenses and hospitality.

The key workers on the Romanian team, Adriana Budeanu and Monți Bouroş enthusiastically took up the idea of leading Eco Puppet-style workshops in schools in the Delta. They plan to use the Eco Puppets show, touring booth, overhead projector, and the tool-and-materials kit for this purpose and will coopt a DDBRA warden (Mihai Baciu), who has theatrical experience, to work with them.

There was high-level support from the Inspector for Extracurricular Studies, the Director of the Childhood Palace, and the director of the DDBRA.

The performances by children from Tulcea's No 12 School, a biology class from the Palatul Copiilor, and the Mahmudia School had showed great progress in building on the groundwork established in the summer thanks to their teachers –

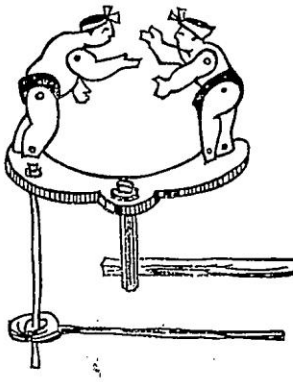
Petrana Ciocan, Claudia Iosifescu, and Nina Sirotenco-Mihalcea

The UK team will be continuing to encourage and advise with the aim of ensuring that the project becomes self sustaining. It will also visit the projects inspired by the conference to assess the results with the Romanian team.

Meg stayed on in Romania for a week, during which she visited, in Horia, the folklorist Gheorghe Mihalcea, who has a lifetime's collection of Dubrogean folktales, customs, children's games, and songs, which Meg is trying to obtain a UK grant to publish (see last issue). This provided very interesting background cultural information to the project, reinforcing the impression that, even though much of traditional culture was destroyed by the old regime, rural culture still underlies Romanian society. Many urban families depend for food on relatives in the country, spending weekends working on smallholdings/family land. This means that there is still a connectedness to the natural world, the seasons, and the weather, that should make the work of the project easier.

Meg also paid a 24-hour visit, as Teatrul Gulliver's guest, to Galați, to what is probably the biggest national puppet festival, where she was adopted by the panel of judges. Most of the work seen was by state-subsidized, theatre-based companies, well staffed and funded. Use of puppets in several productions was fairly limited. All productions but one were based on classic folk tales or texts. The puppetry world seems to be very sophisticated, urban, and conventional. The impression received at Galați was that high standards are expected and that puppetry is held in very high esteem compared with the UK (ie the level of funding, the presence at performances of many adults, the status of the panel of judges, which included the head of State Radio Drama, a drama critic, and an Internationally famous theatre director from Craiova). However, there was no issue-based work seen, nor anything environmental. Meg met Romanian UNIMA President Cristian Pepino and his wife, Cristina, who run Teatrul Tandarica in Bucharest, and saw the premiere of their new *Pinocchio* (the sea scene was very moving, with an excellent giant fish, and the character of the fox was particularly arresting and well played). But the best of all the shows seen was *The Silver Leopard* by Teatrul Ciufulici of Ploiesti, directed by Cristian Pepino, with a beautifully manipulated leopard, whose operator remained completely invisible in the dark, and well-employed special effects.

Vietnam National Puppet Theatre

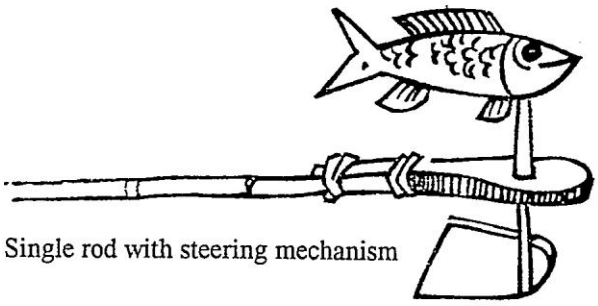


A review of the water-puppet performance is carried in the latest *Animations* (No 5 June/July), but I include here a handful of facts which space prevented my incorporating in it. The (five) professional companies do tour the country as well as abroad, but, despite this, the majority of the approximately 75-million-strong population of this long, narrow land will not have seen a live performance. The Hanoi-based national company has, by the way, two troupes – one resident, the other touring. The spring is the most intensive period for performing, but shows will be put on for festivals at other times of the year. There is no entrance fee in the villages, but the audience may give donations in the form of food; there will also be a small local-authority budget. The open-air shows are held during the day (not every village will have electricity). My thanks to Ngo Quynh Giao, artistic director of the company, for his answers to my questions, and to his interpreter, Vu Thi Tuyet Thuy, for enabling me to understand them.

Tran Van Khe's *Marionnettes sur eau du Vietnam* (Maison des Cultures du Monde,

Double rod system to rotate figures
Illustration (and those overleaf) from *Water Puppetry of Vietnam*, Nguyen Huy Hong, 1986

21



Single rod with steering mechanism

1984) is easy to find. There are, however, two other, difficult-to-obtain books: Nguyen Huy Hong's *Water Puppetry of Vietnam Vietnamese Experience*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1986; and Le Ba Sinh's *Marionnettes sur eau Water Puppetry*, published in Ho Chi Minh City, 1993.

The Vietnam Festival (30 March-28 April) was wideranging, and anyone interested in the musical aspect of the culture will find an excellent article on it by Barley Norton in the June 98 issue of *Seleh Notes* (the UK Gamelan Network Newsletter). The publication covers all aspects of gamelan and related performing arts of Java and Bali, including puppetry (see Nick Gray's "Learning Balinese Gender Wayang" in the same issue). Vietnam's inclusion indicates it is also prepared to go extraterritorial. Obtainable from Sheila Cude, Flat 3, 69 Hillfield Avenue, London N8 7DS; www.palay.ndirect.co.uk/seleh.notes

Puppets of Dong troupe
(Dong Hung district of Thai Binh)

The following concludes Mickey's canter around the cantons on a "hobbyhorse" last autumn.

A Privileged Peek at Swiss-German Puppetry

Mickey Aronoff

Christian Schuppli

Christian lives a couple of streets away from the Gysins, and we tried to see him, but he was busy training dancers from the Ballet of the Basel Theater to use two horse puppets he had constructed for them. Christian and Maya Schuppli run one of the most creative companies in the country, Figurentheater Vagabu.

Basler Marionetten Theater, Basel

Located in Münsterplatz, this impressive theatre has an ensemble of 28 on call. We met Wolfgang Burn and Marianne Marx and were treated to a special tour around the building. This beautiful theatre, with its arched and vaulted ceiling, seats 140. The building itself dates from the 15th century. This is where I got to try out the backbreaking labour and concentration of the professional marionettist. Wolfgang has been with the company for a long time, and carves the wonderful puppets. Marianne makes costumes. They were busy preparing for *Zwerg Nase*.

The theatre occasionally receives subsidies, but they cannot count on when they will get them. There is a training programme each year for 10–12 people; one of these will perhaps go on to join the ensemble. Wolfgang was chosen himself by the founder and first director of the theatre, Richard Koelner, because of his marionette-making talents.

It was that morning that I had heard for the first time about Elisabeth Schöneborn's scenographic techniques, and that afternoon I also had the pleasure of seeing Wolfgang and Marianne dying gauze to use for a scene in their upcoming production.

Winterthurer Marionetten Theater, Waaghaus

This beautiful theatre, run by the lovely and energetic Trudi and Peter Bienz, is where I

22

saw the Bleisch production (the night before, Trudi and Peter were in Rikon for the premiere of the Bühlmann's performance).

Trudi and Peter started a mobile marionette company, Kleine Marionettenbühne Winterthur, in 1960. In 1971, they opened the theatre in the Waaghaus. Companies are brought in, but every now and then a production is made by them (usually with a group of three to five people). Their famous mise en scène (with shadows) is *Die Nachtigall* (1972).

Zürcher Puppen Theater, Zurich

The evening we visited the theatre, there was an AGM and à special performance by Teatro Naku, Venezuela, of *Mujeres a cuatro manos*. The tireless Ursula Pfister runs an incredible programme throughout the year at this theatre.

Museum Jean Tinguely, Basel

Certainly no puppeteer can pass through Basel without a visit to this incredible new museum, a fantastic world of small to gigantic automata, located on the Rhine. Happily for the visitor, most of these idiosyncratic motor-driven sculptures are interactive. Don't forget to take a break and refreshment in the café, where one has a chance to dig into some wonderful Swiss pastry while sitting in Niki de Saint Phalle chairs! The museum is supported by F Hoffmann–La Roche and is located in Grenzacherstrasse/Solitude Park.

Beate Paulus, Ostfildern, Germany

If I may take a side-trip into a part of Germany close to Switzerland, Gustav and I visited the delightful Beate Paulus in Ostfildern. Beate, who turned 80 last year, was seminal in getting Swiss and German puppeteers together through the very important festivals (the Ruiter Puppenspielertage) she ran from the beginning of the sixties till about 1976. Everything – performances, meals, lodging – took place in a sports camp, fostering close associations between the puppeteers. Gustav's association with her began during those times. Some of the puppeteers who performed there were Roser, Therese Keller, Boelger-Kling, Meyer/Friedly, and Loosli.

I was interested in Beate's work in therapeutic puppetry. She began this interest and work during the war, when she devised her first puppet – an older woman who would try to coax and cajole an injured six-year-old boy into doing his schoolwork. The boy, who lost both feet under a train (Beate was able to rescue his two siblings, but couldn't carry a third), still corresponds with her today and tells her of his own grandchildren.

Beate didn't feel this work was therapeutic. The boy would play with Beate and would have a child's puppet on his hand. She said that, as it was her first puppet, she really didn't think about the possibilities – she only used this puppet to scold him if he didn't do his work or to praise him if he did, and she wouldn't bring the puppet out for play unless he did. But it was during this work that she saw the possibilities and the power of puppets. She asked herself (and advises that one has to continue to ask oneself): Is it me? Is it the puppet? Is it the child?

Not just a puppeteer and festival organizer, Beate has been a kindergarten teacher and a nurse. She now works in a home for elderly people. She works with and performs for 12–16 people, who range from mid-60s to 96. She says that they don't like fairy tales and don't accept them. Her theory is that perhaps they were never told fairy tales when they were children. They prefer stories that deal with daily life – for example, a man in a nursing home has a visitor but is embarrassed because he's still in his nightgown. She says she must make a new show every two weeks, or they don't go. A new show motivates them to get up and walk to the area where the performances are held.

Beate uses large rod-marionettes with simple controls. Weighted with sand, they can sit on their own. She plays on the floor because the older people have a difficult time

looking up (Beate says she's seen people bring glove-puppet shows into nursing homes, but people never see them, as the puppets are held so high).

Beate, who is very spry and lively, performs with another puppeteer. Before the show, each person has a chance to have contact with the puppet. The women caress the puppets, while the men look at technique.

The audience sits in a circle to watch the show. There are no second or third rows, so everyone has good vision and possibilities for contact. Beate says it's important that they keep the same characters but that the stories change. The characters are Herr Sonntag (Mr Sunday), a princess and prince, Hans, and three generations from children to grandparents. Scenery is behind. The players are out front, without a stage, and it feels, Beate says, freer.

The twenty minutes with the audience includes the introduction to the puppets. Afterwards, the puppeteers accompany the patients to their rooms. Beate feels the nurses must see the show to be able to speak to the patients about it, but nurses tend to use the time to take a break (this is the curse of many therapeutic puppeteers!). Beate feels it's a lost opportunity, that the nurses and patients together could talk about and remember something nice.

For those of you who would like to know more about her and her work with Gretel Gustorff, there is an article in *Puppenspiel Information* 1994/1 Nr. 70.

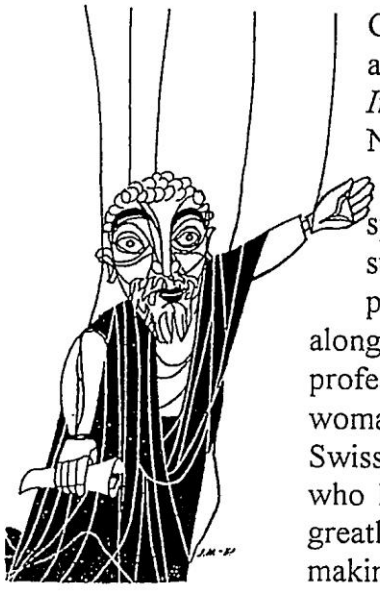


Illustration from leaflet produced by Die Zürcher Marionetten

Beate has kept a special small leather suitcase full of the puppets she made, along with two others, a professor and an Indian woman, made by the Swiss Therese Keller, who has influenced Beate greatly, not just in the making of glove puppets but in the manipulation, which uses all five fingers (middle in the head, 2nd and 4th pointed upwards into the shoulders, and 1st and 3rd in the hands). Poignantly, there is a label on the suitcase which states that, should Beate go into a nursing home, these puppets (which include a Kasper, a professor, and a princess) should accompany her.

Summary

I was sad when it was time to leave friends – old and new. It is was for me a very special time. The people are kind, creative, generous, hospitable. They have a wry and delightful sense of humour. Perhaps one could call a "folk joke" the line people use when gardens are overflowing and nobody wants the surplus: "Lock your car – it's zucchini time." They add "li" to words to make affectionate diminutives, and the rhythm of the Swiss-German dialect produces the kind of happiness one has from hearing familiar childhood songs.

The puppetry tradition is strong, and it would seem that a custom of sharing might have something to do with keeping standards high. The respect the puppeteers commonly have for each other in the German part of Switzerland is admirable. Shows are attended by other puppeteers; meals are shared afterwards. There is a great warmth and camaraderie. Everywhere I went, I saw the familiar faces of Swiss-German puppeteers enjoying and celebrating the fruits of each other's labours.

I am grateful to Gustav Gysin for his encyclopaedic knowledge and for his enthusiasm in spreading it. His family is the kind one would want for one's own. I am grateful also for the kind generosity of all the puppeteers I met, who shared bread and information with equal zeal. I cannot thank them enough. The memories of this visit will be etched in my mind forever.

A subscription to *Figura* (printed in German and French) will keep you current. Write: Figura, Swiss Puppetry Association, Postfach 501, CH–8401 Winterthur, Switzerland.

"The great 19th-century Russian surrealist writer Nikolai Gogol, himself surreally claimed by the communists as a forerunner of socialist realism, described his nation as an uncontrollable troika being carried headlong and without a driver into an unforeseeable future." I quote this sentence (from an editorial in *The European*) in full simply because I like it, although it is here merely to illustrate the "elasticity" of the term surrealism. Sometimes, however, a capital letter will help, and the Czech and Slovak Surrealists certainly merit upper case. Anyone wishing to learn more about the Czech and Slovak Surrealists would be advised to obtain the very useful 40-page catalogue of the retrospective exhibition of the Group of Czech and Slovak Surrealists, which bears the same title as John Furse's following piece. The group ethos is very important in the Švankmajers' development. It is pleasant to see that the link established between Wales and the Czech Republic with the Jan and Eva Švankmajer exhibitions in the Principality in 1992 continues. The "black" novel *Valerie a týden divů* (*Valerie and the Week of Wonders*), written by Vítězslav Nezval in 1935, during his Surrealist period, which centres on the fantasies of an adolescent girl, also provides an interesting take on the subject of sexuality/voyeurism broached in the article. Jaromil Jireš turned Nezval's work into a film in 1969, which, incidentally, made Valerie somewhat younger.

Invention - Imagination - Interpretation

John Furse

The Czech and Slovak Surrealists startle Swansea – Ron Mueck causes a sensation off Bond Street. Jan Švankmajer's *Alice* and Mueck's *Ghost*, coming hard on the heels of the recent *Lolita* controversy, have given the art-world food for thought.

The Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, together with the Swansea Art Workshop and Taliesen Art Centre, brought Wonderland to Wales with a mixture of dreamlike nonsense and psychological insight. Props from Švankmajer's films featured in the exhibition, as did Eva Švankmajerová's minutely detailed paintings. The puppet theatre from *Faust* with massively carved marionettes was certainly impressive, but it was the showing of the full-length version of *Alice* that startled most. The camera lovingly follows every move she makes in the way that tennis paparazzi stalk Anna Kournikova – she grows and grows up before our very eyes. Hello, Bunny!

Ron Mueck once upon a time made puppets, now he makes Art. *Ghost* is a larger-than-life standing figure of a "ghostly pale girl in a nasty swimsuit" leaning against the side of a bath. The effect is unnervingly precise though terrifyingly lifeless. One inevitably feels the dank deadness of the recently drowned. No Surrealist, Mueck is something of a cold fish. Notions of necromancy shock.

There is undoubted attraction in "under-age voyeurism" – even Cliff Richard wanted a Living Doll – but, when faced with either *Alice* or *Ghost* in the current concerned climate, the inventive imagination is open to perhaps unintended interpretation.

Czech & Slovak Surrealism (Swansea venues 4 April - 31 May 1998).

Ron Mueck (Anthony d'Offay Gallery, Dering Street, London W1, 29 April - 18 June 1998).

Bratislava to London

The very extensive and highly enterprising Festival of Central European Culture held in London, 21 June-12 July, has received little publicity and its puppetry component none, so far as I am aware.

Nevertheless, I did discover that a puppet company was to perform *Le Nozze di Figaro* and thus turned up at the Bloomsbury Theatre on Sunday 28 June. Glancing at the notices in the theatre window, I saw a bill for the play. My heart sank. I have selective vision, my eye had picked out the word "puppet" in the festival blurb and I had booked on the strength of that, but now I saw that the performance was by the Milan Sládek Mime Theatre,from Bratislava. I have a blind spot for mime artists. I love *Les Enfants du Paradis*, but despite, if that is possible, the mime Baptiste (Jean-Louis Barrault). When the first person to appear on stage was a traditional mime, with powdered face and white suit, I almost

suffered cardiac arrest. (To be fair, he proved an engaging fellow, who made occasional appearances in the capacity of MC, which is not to say that I have significantly weakened towards Debureaus.)

This Mozart opera, of course, could hardly be bettered, it seems to me, for exploitation by puppets, so packed is it with visual incident, physicality, and intrigue: the lecherous count wants to bed the maid Susanna, who is engaged to Figaro, who is desired by the middle-aged housekeeper Marcellina, while the youth Cherubino has moved on from the gardener's daughter Barbarina to fancying the countess; Cherubino hides under the countess's dress, where he is discovered by the count, hides in the countess's wardrobe, where not he but Susanna is discovered by the suspicious nobleman, and jumps out of a window to escape exposure; there is a forged document, multiple subterfuge, disguises, mistaken identities. All that and a happy ending too.

The large stage was simple: two elevations, one 18" above the other, with a backdrop of a Romantic bosky landscape with two statues. The puppets, about three-quarters life size and dressed in colourful period costume, had expressively carved wooden heads and limbs. They had a short rod behind the head and another hand-grip at the base of the "spine"; they were also equipped with a string to the wrists, which was simply draped around the puppet's neck. They were usually manipulated by three operators, though the strings enabled fewer – sometimes just one operator – to manipulate them when less refined movement of the arms was required, a necessity even for a company of 10 operators when the full cast of puppets was assembled. But not only were the characters well defined sculpturally – from the long shanks of Figaro to the embonpoint of Count Almaviva – but they were exceedingly well individualized in terms of movement, in a production inspired by commedia dell'arte. All performed "on points," and even the rapid piggy gait of the count had a kind of gracefulness thanks to the well-drilled, fluent movement of the blue-suited ensemble of puppeteers (a tribute, I imagine, to their mime training). The signal advantage of these puppets over marionettes (the usual performers of opera) was the way they were able to occupy the whole of the space, including the aerial dimension, their gestures, often exaggerated, transporting them into the air so that at times we were witnessing a ballet which no human dancer/acrobat could emulate. They were "motions." The encores were well deserved. Do go to see them if you can.

Another source of inspiration cited in the Bratislava company's programme is Bunraku. Given the casualness with which this term can be used, I thought these remarks by Nancy Staub useful (from "False Assumptions", published in *Puppet Art at the Turn of the Millennium*, addresses given at the 17th UNIMA Congress.

". . . Some egocentric individuals falsely assume comprehension after a brief and superficial exposure to an art form. Inaccurate generalizations and empty imitations result if only a few performances serve as the basis of analysis. For example, *bunraku* has too often been described as a "style" of puppetry with three manipulators dressed in black with black hoods. Actually, *bunraku* is the name of a particular theatre form in Japan performed only by a specific association with a complex tradition. The Awaji Island puppet troupe, among others, uses three-person puppets and is often misnamed *bunraku* by outsiders. Sometimes in *bunraku* performances these are unhooded manipulators. In certain scenes there are some

Illustration from *Structure of Bunraku*, Miyao Shigeo, 1984

26

dressed in white or in ceremonial robes. Minor characters are manipulated by one person. There are very rarely two manipulators for the three-person *bunraku* puppets as described by one author. Perhaps, he witnessed one of the special exceptions or only saw two manipulators in a photograph and assumed the third was not there? One of the more amusing incidents of misinformation was an advertisement in *The Puppetry Journal* for *bunraku* 'hats' something new. People should be aware *bunraku* is like a trademark for the Bùnraku Association of Japan just as much as *Muppets* is for Jim Henson Productions of the USA. The term 'bunraku-style' and even 'bunraku' has had a wide application in the West, with an intention of respect and admiration that has often degenerated into empty imitation. Perhaps the Bunraku Association should engage the Henson lawyers. This is a question of 'intellectual properties' so much in the news these days."

Bandung Dispatch

Anna Ingleby, BrUNIMA's "representative" in Java, should be back in this country soon, when I hope she will give us further benefit of her experiences. For the time being, however, I hope she will not mind my quoting a short excerpt from a letter of hers dated 4 June:

"Suharto may have gone, but the situation here is very complex and I expect there will be more trouble later – perhaps when the national supply of imported basics runs out. It's a great shame I don't understand much of the local Sundanese language, because the *wayang* show plays a crucial role in educating the people here. Information which Pak Asep [see *Animations* No 6 Aug/Sept 97 and No 1 Oct/Nov 97] receives is later incorporated into the *wayang* – for example, Gatokaca had to tell Cepot what *reformasi* meant. And the latest commentary from the divided local council was also featured whilst a king was consulting his minister. There are still some dangerous characters up there (somewhere) who are making threats to people who they still regard as dangerous – so things are far from open. Everybody is suffering the effects of the *kris mon*, *krisis moneter* (monetary crisis) or *krisis monyeter* (monkey crisis), as Pak Asep once joked.

"Even Pak Asep has to be careful now financially. Before he used to get 15 or more bookings per month. In April there were still 12 or so, but in May only 2, in June 2 or 3."

BrUNIMA Annual Lecture 1998

Françoise Atlan and Juan Carmona's flamenco homage to Lorca, Lindsay Kemp and Christopher Bruce's revival of *Cruel Garden* for Rambert Dance Company, and Pralipe Roma's *Blood Wedding* (a Mulheim-based gypsy company in exile from Yugoslavia since 1990) have all been seen in the last two months. This autumn will see BrUNIMA also making a contribution to the commemoration, when Cariad Astles will deliver this year's lecture, entitled "Lorca, Don Cristóbal, and Carnavalesque," as part of the Bradford Puppetry Festival, on Saturday 17 October.

Other Diary Events

London

The Rosemary Branch Theatre will be holding a festival of puppetry for children 9-16 August. Appearing will be Jacolly, Ronnie Le Drew, Geoff Felix, Jactito, Professor Popup, and Parachute. For details, contact the theatre: 2 Shepperton Rd, London N1 3DT; tel 0171 704 6665.

Bradford

The Bradford Puppetry Festival is taking place in the autumn at the Alhambra Studio Theatre. The main focus is the weekend of Friday 16 to Sunday 18 October, which provisionally includes Faulty Optic's *Tunnel Vision* (Fri); Lempen Puppets' *The Last of the Trolls*, the BrUNIMA lecture, and Bambalina Titelles's *Don Quixote* (Sat); workshop, Compagnie Gare Centrale's *Princesse* (Sun).

The festival is a collaboration between The Alhambra Theatre and Freehand Theatre. A leaflet on all the events, including those on other dates, should be available as of early September from Lizzie Allen/Simon Hatfield, Freehand Theatre, 134 Harrogate St, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD3 OLE; tel 01274 640072.

Brighton

visions98 is gearing up. Performances, workshops, film screenings, and exhibitions will take place in Brighton 21-31 October, with companies touring to Belfast, Cranleigh, Famham, Manchester, Norfolk, Oxford, and Wales. Performances for adults include Stuffed Puppet Theatre's *Salomé,* Bambalina Titelles's *Don Quixote,* Faulty Optic's *Coat on, Duffle off,* and Improbable Theatre's *Animo;* plus, for children, Storybox Theatre's *The Half Chick,* Zootrop's *iHello Yello! (En Groc),* and Indefinite Articles' *Bull's Eye.* For details, contact University of Brighton Gallery, Grand Parade, Brighton, BN2 2JY; tel 01273 643012.

Harlow

The Harlow Playhouse is the venue for a new festival 26-29 October. Appearing are: On the Other Hand, Jactito, Kabutar, and The DaSilvas. For details telephone 01279 446760

Penzance

The Penzance Festival will be held 28-31 October at the newly refurbished Acorn Theatre. For details telephone Julia Twomlow on 01736 331583

Chrudim

The annual national amateur festival in Chrudim, Czech Republic, will be held 1-6 July. The programme is in Czech. Details available from us..

Ghent

The Europees Figurenteatercentrum in Ghent stages its Figeuro puppetry festival 19-26 July. Twenty three groups from 12 countries will present more than 110 performances. All information from Myriam Bodenghien at EF, Trommelstraat 1, B-9000 Gent, Belgium; tel +32 9 225 45 45, fax +32 25 45 45, e-mail eftc.gent@skynet.be

Housekeeping

The deadline for the next *Newsletter* is **1 August** (Helen Fry/Mark Dobson, 5a Garnet House, Garnet St, Wapping. London E1 9QY), for the *Bulletin* **1 October**. In addition to articles, suitable accompanying line drawings and other illustrations would be most welcome. On a self-critical note, I feel a certain sameyness has come to pervade *Media Watch* (aka *Streetwise...*), which is not surprising because I have been providing all the entries for a long time – I read or watch the same things, retain the same interests. Could readers not supply some cuttings?

Wanted: a volunteer, three times a year, to collect issues of the Bulletin from Bicester, collate and put them in envelopes. Contact Ray.

Corrections and Clarifications

We have been informed by Malcolm Knight that the Festival Agenda produced by the International Federation of Centres for Puppetry Arts is copyright and consequently all enquiries should be directed to the Scottish Mask and Puppet Theatre Centre, Glasgow, and not the BrUNIMA general secretary.

33British Centre of Union Internationale de la Marionnette
Hon President: John Blundall Chair: Ray DaSilva Vice Chair: Glyn Edwards
General Secretary: Lorraine von Gehlen, Cross Border Arts, Wysing Arts Centre, Fox Road, Bourn, Cambridge CB3 7TX. Tel 01954 718 181 email lorraine@cba.eastern-arts.co.uk
Membership Secretary & Treasurer: John Phillips, 140 Barnsbury Road, London N10ER Tel 0171 833 4408
Editor of Bulletin: Robert Fowler, 44 Bexley Court, Reading, Berks. RG30 2DY Tel 0118 957 6528 e-mail: rfowler@ldbureau.co.uk